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ABSTRACT

To study best practices in the area of international exchange, a survey was conducted of member institutions of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges. Responses were received from 19 institutions about practices, activities, services, and other program aspects considered to be exemplary. Questions were also asked about challenges and obstacles to international exchange among colleges. Some universities appear to be faring well in international exchange, with more qualified international applicants than they can accommodate and an international staff that is adequate in numbers and efficient in its tasks. Others are not doing that well. The issue of finances permeated all responses to all survey items, and all respondents asserted that increased financial support is a key ingredient for successful progress toward their goals. Institutional commitment to the goals of international exchange was frequently identified as an obstacle to exchange programs. The need for a central office to coordinate international exchange was cited as an advantage by institutions that had such an office, and as an obstacle by institutions that did not. Almost all institutions indicated that the requirements of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Internal Revenue Service imposed a formidable burden on international staff time and resources. This study was designed and carried out before September 11, 2001, and since then, it appears that challenges to international educational exchange have increased. An appendix lists the responding institutions. (SLD)

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Major Obstacles and Best Practices in

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National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges

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Major Obstacles and Best Practices in International Educational Exchanges

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November 2001

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Table of Contents

Preface v

Analysis of Trends

Introduction 1

Analysis 1

Recruitment and Retention of International Participants 1

Diversity 4

Students and Faculty 4

Major Areas of Study 5

Geography 6

Finances 8

Individual vs. Group Programs 11

Transfer of Credits 13

Exchange Agreements 14

Communication/Dissemination of Information 15

Immigration and Other Legal Issues 16

Practices in Social Support and Cultural Enrichment 17

Internationalization of the Campus and the Community 18

Professional Development 19

Health and Safety Issues 20

Summary 23

Appendix: Responding Universities 25

Preface

The events of September 11th make clear that we should do everything we can to facilitate international student exchanges. The trend to greater exchanges is one we should applaud, for it holds great promise for the improved global understanding we so desperately need.[1]

Through communication with my colleagues on the Standing Committee on International Exchange and Matriculation of NASULGC's Commission on International Programs and in interaction with staff members of the International Center at the University of Louisville, I am often impressed that, as we face the multitude of challenges in the work of university international exchange, some among us have developed unique and effective practices for meeting those challenges. Since our NASULGC member institutions share many common objectives toward furthering international education and study abroad, the notion arose that we should try to identify and share some of the effective strategies for international exchange that are currently in practice.

When I broached the idea of a survey of *Best Practices in International Exchange* with NASULGC staff members, they were enthusiastic. They provided extensive consultation and practical support as we further developed the concept for research. I also received consultation and productive suggestions from members of the Standing Committee on International Exchange and Matriculation. Staff members of the International Center and the Center for Latin American Education at the University of Louisville worked with me in developing the survey items. These were designed to elicit open-ended narrative responses, a format that can require more time in responding, but which tends to produce a broader range of information. Indeed, we gained insights that could never have surfaced through the use of a multiple-choice or short-answer format.

At that time we realized also that *best practices* must have been conceived in response to recognized needs or problems, all of which, our own experience told us, have not been resolved at any institution. Thus we decided to include a section in the survey on *Challenges/Obstacles in International Exchange.* We reasoned that some exemplary practices would be better understood in a context that included expression of the needs and concerns behind those practices. We expected that respondents would reveal many challenges and obstacles they hold in common. We now know as well that there is interesting variation among the universities responding in regard to institutional values and goals—one institution's frustration may be in striving toward an objective that is of no consequence on another campus.

We should point out that this study was designed and carried out before the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, in New York and Washington. After those tragic events, as

1 Statement from the AACU, *In the Wake of the National Tragedy of September 11th*, "AACU Communications," aacucomm@aacu.nw.de.us.

we prepared another draft of the survey report to be presented at the November 2001 meeting of NASULGC, it became apparent that another great challenge faces our member institutions in fulfilling their missions regarding international exchange. This challenge encompasses both carrying out realistic measures to ensure the security of study-abroad students and meeting the threat of diminished willingness to participate on the part of both students and their parents or sponsors. We address these concerns in a special section just preceding the Summary of this report.

Although we included a section in the survey seeking demographic data, it now appears that some of our responding institutions could not provide such information and others indicated that it was incomplete. Thus we used these data, not to depict a valid demographic representation of university international exchange, but to see if the limited quantitative information seemed to help clarify trends suggested in the narrative responses. Thus this report summarizes the *Best Practices and Challenges/Obstacles in University International Exchange* submitted by the nineteen respondent institutions (the list of respondent institutions is included in the Appendix),[2] with an accompanying analysis intended to identify major trends and issues worthy of continuing study and discussion among the member universities of NASULGC.

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Chair
Standing Committee on International Exchange
Commission on International Programs

[2] The three-part survey instrument and accompanying letter is available upon request from the authors of this report.

Analysis of Trends

Introduction

In Part II of the survey, *Best Practices in University International Exchange*, respondents were asked to report practices, activities, services and the like considered to be exemplary. Indeed, many effective practices were submitted whose success is reflected in the quantitative data elicited in Part I and in the satisfaction and pride obviously felt by the international staff persons making the reports. In response to certain items, some universities reported exemplary results, due not to identified practices or approaches, but simply to the nature or location of the institution. Recognizing and understanding these fortuitous conditions is just as important as analyzing practices. Some frustration and dissatisfaction were also expressed in Part II, although this other side of the coin—obstacles to international exchange—is the focus of Part III.

Responses to Part III, *Challenges/Obstacles in International Exchange*, might be expected to mirror the *best practices* described in Part II, since effective practices and activities could be assumed to meet challenges and overcome obstacles. To some extent this proved to be true—in some cases a specific *best practice* appeared to meet a specific *challenge* or to be the solution to a problem described. In other cases, a new or revised practice alone might not enable the progress—the very nature, support structure and/or location of the institution determining, to a great extent, the scope and direction of its development in international exchange.

Nevertheless, it appears that results of the survey will be more meaningful if our analysis examines both perspectives in an integrated way. Therefore we have proceeded to identify major trends or themes among the *obstacles/challenges* cited for each survey item and, after considering the *best practices* in a similar manner, to point out relationships and some apparent significance for practice in international exchange.

Analysis

Recruitment and Retention of International Participants

This item as well as item 2, Diversity (which is further subdivided into three parts—students and faculty, areas of study, and geography) were predicated on the assumption that American universities place considerable value on international exchange and seek to broaden their participation in such activities both through increasing the number of people involved and in attaining greater diversity among the participants. Our survey results reveal that such a value is not universal. For realistic and practical reasons, some institutions have sufficient numbers of international students (some with many more

applicants than desired) and thus have no concerns about recruitment to increase numbers. Such institutions may or may not desire more *diversity* among their international students; this will be addressed further in items 2, 3 and 4 below. Institutions with sufficient foreign student enrollment may, however, wish to increase the number or diversity of their U.S. students studying abroad.

Approximately half of the responding universities indicate that they wish more international students and almost all want more study-abroad participation by their U.S. students. Obstacles and challenges cited in increasing foreign student enrollment include, in descending order of importance:

a. **Admissions for, and administration of, international programs is not centralized.** Spreading these functions among many units/departments/offices appears to result in slow, complex admissions, in little or no recruiting effort, in fewer resources allocated to international activities and in no international policy or goals.

b. **Little or no financial aid is available for international exchange.** Aid often is allowed for U.S. students only (unless from external grant programs) and is only to be expended in the home institution, not abroad—especially undergraduate aid.

c. **Rigid degree requirements (especially in professional schools) discourage participation in international study.** Some degree programs severely limit inclusion of foreign transfer credits, language or international affairs study. By taking on such studies, students may lose a full term or more in progress toward graduation.

d. **Some institutions fare poorly in the competition for international students.** Aside from the appeal of renowned academic programs, some U.S. universities in well-known urban locations can draw foreign students simply on a city's notoriety. Also, areas known for balmy climate and social ambience may enjoy an edge in the international students' selection process. (This was not a frequent complaint, but was plaintively expressed by an excellent mid-American institution in a "semi-rural setting with challenging climate"!)

It is interesting to note that only a. above refers directly to problems with recruiting *practice*—tying such efforts to the need for centralized admissions and administration. The other three problem areas indicate *conditions*—financial, academic or geographic—that affect the decision-making of prospective international and study-abroad students. These *conditions* are considered to be known to such students and to negatively affect recruiting; thus the problem is not one of promulgation of information.

In regard to well-known cities, their fame represents a two-edged sword. One New York State institution pointed out that New York City was perceived internationally as dangerous (well before September 11, 2001), but international applicants like to be near enough to visit it.

The *best practices* responses seem to interface very neatly with the *obstacles/challenges* stated above regarding recruitment and retention. Listed in order of importance, they seem to form four areas of solution to the challenge of attaining and keeping satisfactory numbers of international participants.

a. **A centralized unit (adequately funded) administers international exchange, carrying out uniform, institution-wide policies.** Included are services both for international and U.S. study-abroad students, faculty and scholars. Such a unit

encompasses recruitment, academic advising, visa-legal issue assistance, orientation, support for generating faculty-initiated programs, information, services for all departments, etc.

b. **A special unit or special personnel within the admissions structure processes admissions and transfer of credit for international exchange participants.** These functions are carried out in collaboration with academic units/departments and in accordance with established policies. Timely and consistent responses to applications are essential and cost-effective.

c. **By providing highly regarded programs (especially in business, science, engineering and agriculture), certain well-known U.S. universities have more qualified international applicants than they can accept** (although they may seek a broader *diversity* of students). Thus recruitment for numbers is not a goal or function. The same holds for institutions in some major cities and for some with climatic and/or social ambience attractive to foreign applicants.

d. **Study-abroad participation increases with more financial aid.**

e. **Specific successful strategies in recruitment for international exchange were reported.** These include information carried by study-abroad students and faculty, Internet/WWW recruitment, communicating with U.S. Embassy public affairs offices, informing USAID missions of training opportunities, developing special programs attractive to foreign students and promoting international activities among faculty to stimulate interest.

Consistent with the *challenges/obstacles* listed further above, the most frequent *best practice* affecting recruitment and retention of international participants was the provision of centralized units for the administration of international exchange and for the related admissions services. Clearly pertinent is the need for standardized, institution-wide policies regarding these programs and activities.

The responses made evident the fact that certain highly respected U.S. universities need no recruitment strategies; indeed some are deluged with more applicants than they can accommodate, particularly for study in the areas of technology, business and agriculture. It is evident that these are areas for which increased knowledge is essential to the development of nations around the globe and that the government and the private sector as well as prosperous families in such nations are strongly supporting such study. Nevertheless, other U.S. institutions, less well known but with respectable academic quality, seek increased numbers and must develop the strategies to do so.

As in the *challenges/obstacles* above, among the *best practices* is the perception among respondents that some international students choose their U.S. site on the basis of balmy climate, social ambience or geographical convenience—just as do many U.S. college students. This phenomenon has little to do with recruitment practices, but rather with the identity and geographic location of the institution and the nature of young people of college age.

Financial aid figured heavily, as a problem when insufficient, and as an effective aid in recruitment when available. Finally, respondents reported a wide variety of specific techniques for recruitment, most of them involving the effective dissemination of information, both to prospective foreign applicants and to U.S. prospects for study abroad.

The greatest emphasis among the responses, however, both from the *problem* and *best practice* perspective, seemed to be given to the value of a centralized administrative structure, both for administration and admissions. Also prevalent was the perception that an underlying commitment of support, in the form of institution-wide policy regarding international exchange, is critical to success in recruitment and retention.

Diversity

Diversity of International Students and Faculty Members

Public universities across the United States unanimously share goals and policies to the effect that they will seek to serve the wide diversity of population in our nation. They mount various strategies to attract and accommodate groups previously underrepresented on their campuses, focusing their efforts on gender, race, ethnic origin, religious orientation, disabilities, non-traditional student status and the like. Nevertheless, at many institutions such groups remain underrepresented among international students and study-abroad participants.

Responding institutions reported *challenges/obstacles* in seeking diversity that fall into three categories:

a. **Insufficient interest or motivation toward diversity exists on campus and in the community and state.** Largely white or predominantly black, ethnically homogeneous populations, limited foreign language study and/or black/white polarization—all are factors in limiting enthusiasm for broadening diversity in some institutions.

b. **High costs of study abroad and the reality that underrepresented groups often are low in income both here and abroad—these factors suggest that financial aid is essential if more of these groups are to participate.** Unfortunately, much of presently available aid cannot be used for international study, according to policy.

c. **Limited international staff time and resources prevent efforts to track numbers of underrepresented groups and efforts to include them.** Visa and immigration paperwork, among other tasks, was cited as very time-consuming.

Certainly, accommodating disabled and non-traditional students in international programs can increase costs. Recruitment and tracking their participation, as well as that of other underrepresented groups, also requires extra investment. To earmark financial aid for such students could add stress on campuses, which already report inadequate aid available for international study. Providing the necessary staff resources and financial aid represents a substantial commitment that some institutions are not yet willing or able to make.

While mission statements abound which include goals regarding diversity, it appears that such goals may be low in priority on many campuses. Obstacle a. above suggests that popular attitudes in community and state, as well as political influences, are factors in this phenomenon. One Midwestern institution cited growth of immigrant communities and resultant "English only" measures passed by state and local governments as elements affecting campus progress toward diversity objectives.

The responses on *Best Practices* regarding this item were largely concerned with ways to increase financial aid in pursuing greater diversity among international participants. A few practical strategies for attracting underrepresented students also appeared.

a. **Increase financial aid available to underrepresented groups.**
   - Allocate special funds for this purpose.
   - Allow any/all financial aid to be used for study abroad.
   - Seek external funding for study abroad for minority students.

b. **Work with departments or programs that focus on underrepresented groups to seek exchange with foreign university units with the same interest.** Successful examples of this are special education and occupational therapy.

c. **Provide shorter and/or summer study-abroad programs to appeal to non-traditional students.** Semester or yearlong programs are often impractical both in cost and in time commitment for older, non-degree or part-time students.

The *best practices* listed above can provide some direction for other institutions as they move toward increasing diversity among international participants. None of these practices, however, speak to the first and somewhat overwhelming *obstacle* a. above—a problem of community attitude and motivation. It appears that the prevailing values that underlie *action* regarding diversity may vary greatly among the public universities surveyed. Indeed, this should not be surprising if we acknowledge the wide range of attitudes existing within and among the communities of this nation regarding the issues of racial, ethnic and religious diversity, of increasing immigration, of "English only" versus bilingual or multilingual policies, etc.

Diversity of Major Areas of Study

Responding universities indicate that even when appreciable numbers of persons are involved in international programs, some fields of study are sparsely represented. The *obstacles* cited include some already mentioned: lack of interest, high costs and rigid U.S. degree requirements that limit transfer of foreign credits.

a. **Some U.S. students and faculty do not perceive value in study abroad.** In fields with no tradition of foreign study, little is known of the impact it can have; some have worries about security and living conditions, and typically have not planned ahead, such as by pursuing language study, etc.

b. **U.S. science and technology majors have difficulty in finding coursework abroad that can be transferred back for degrees.** Fields like engineering, science, agriculture and human ecology have exacting standards as to what content fulfills degree requirements.

c. **Sufficient funding is rarely available for less common majors in study-abroad programs.** Aid is more available to students in traditional study-abroad fields. Cost of study abroad tends to be higher in non-traditional sites, also.

d. **Rigid, longer-term international programs are less attractive for students in diverse fields of study.** More variation in duration, cost and location of study-abroad programs would attract greater variety of students.

e. **Students in some fields from some nations feel unwelcome in the U.S.** Bureaucratic procedures, high costs and the perception of "a suspicious and unwelcoming U.S. government" are partly responsible for many international students choosing to study in countries other than the U.S.

A variety of *best practices* were submitted which have promise for broadening the sampling of students across more areas of study. Each of these represents special initiatives by international office staff or by academic units.

a. **Collaborative efforts by international staff and department faculty encourage study abroad by students in less-represented major areas.** These include engineering, architecture and professional schools, using presentations in clubs, classes, etc.

b. **Promotion of courses in foreign language and geographic area studies among professional school majors results in increased study-abroad participation.** Such efforts can bring heightened interest and recognition of opportunities linking these studies with career interests.

c. **A historically black U.S. university recruits international students from Africa and from lesser-known Eastern European nations.** Through interest in exploring and building cultural and historical ties, relations are cultivated with some less traditional sources of foreign scholars.

d. **Faculty are encouraged to develop international programs which are multidisciplinary and cross college lines.** This practice pulls in both faculty and students from areas less common in international programs.

Items a., b. and d. above provide some response to the *obstacles* cited in regard to science, technology and professional studies. These three *best practices* all require some commitment and collaboration among faculty across disciplinary lines. Item c. reflects a phenomenon also observed in some Southwestern universities that capitalizes upon the Latin American heritage of some faculty and students by developing international ties in Latin American nations. This suggests that other U.S. institutions with some racial/ethnic identity might find that mutually beneficial relationships can flourish with specific countries or global regions of similar identity.

The *best practices* summarized here were carried out in institutions that obviously enjoyed commitment and special efforts on the part of international staff and/or academic faculty and administration. Interest and motivation are key ingredients which, to be dependable and continuing, probably require an underlying presidential or institutional priority status. The oft-mentioned obstacle—need for more financial support—is given greater attention when its remediation is instrumental to a stated priority. Nevertheless, these *best practices* represent viable strategies for involving more persons from less-represented disciplines in international exchange.

Geography (Diversity of Countries Visited by U.S. Students and Countries Represented on U.S. Campuses)

Most U.S. universities appear to share a goal of increasing geographic diversity in their international exchange programs. They are pleased to announce representation from a broad array of foreign countries and often express the objective of playing a humanitarian role in assisting underdeveloped nations to move toward greater global participation through education. Financial and cultural constraints, however, play a role in limiting numbers of students from, and U.S. students going to, such nations. *Obstacles/Challenges* fell into three categories.

a. **U.S. students tend to choose European foreign language study and thus wish to study abroad where they can use the language.** Lack of language proficiency is a greater barrier in general for U.S. students compared to students of most other countries who seek study abroad.

b. **Less popular areas for study abroad (such as Asia, Latin America, Middle East) are perceived as dangerous, lacking comfort and facilities, culturally strange and "backward" in academic quality.** Some respondents attributed this to geographical and political ignorance among parents and students and to the media's over-concentration on violence and political upheaval in these areas.

c. **Financial aid is essential in attracting international students from developing countries; also, students from these areas may come less prepared to achieve required TOEFL scores.** The majority of international students come with their own support from prosperous Asian or oil-rich Middle Eastern countries; African and Latin American students have fewer resources—family, corporate or governmental.

The number of U.S. students studying Oriental, Eastern European and Middle Eastern languages is minuscule compared to those in classes of French, German, Spanish and Italian. These are the languages of Western cultural heritage and—regardless of the obvious utility of other languages in a global economy—they will continue to dominate our language studies. The irony is that the *most* popular of these—Spanish—will be little used in Latin America, partly for the reasons above in item b. (The exception to this is Mexico, where many students travel to hone their language skills and where many Americans are involved in NAFTA-stimulated business.) There is little interest in Central and South America, home of some 250 million Spanish speakers. Mistakenly, these areas seem more remote in distance than Europe, backward in security and creature comforts and lacking in renowned academic institutions. Similar stereotypes prevail regarding study in Asia and Africa.

Some responding universities reported roughly 60% of study-abroad students going to Western Europe, with considerably fewer—16% of international students—coming from that area. Approximately 68% of international students come to the U.S. from Asia and the Middle East. The implication is clear that financially emerging nations are eagerly sending their college students abroad to bring back the science and technology needed for continuing development and to gain the business and management know-how for competing in the global economy.

One U.S. institution spoke of "competition" with the United Kingdom and Australia in seeking highly qualified international students. The international students who, in large part, bring their own resources are welcomed. Meanwhile most institutions that would like more geographical diversity are faced with limited amounts of the financial aid which could enable them to host more students from developing nations.

Best practices were reported which have been found effective in increasing geographical diversity among both study-abroad participants and international students. These practices comprise four categories, the first two of which rely upon special funding.

a. **In financial aid for international students, preference is given to those from less-developed countries. In funding faculty-initiated international programs, preference is given to those involving less-developed countries.** Others reported that any faculty activity in less-developed countries was utilized as an opportunity to recruit capable international students to the U.S.

b. **After external grants (USAID, USIA) initiated relations, institutions nurtured continuing partnerships with universities in less-developed countries.** These relationships provide for continuing exchange in Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America.

c. **Directors of area studies programs (African, Latin American, Russian/Eastern European) work with international staff to promote geographic diversity.**

d. **A special administrative unit for international development does outreach around the globe, placing graduate programs in capitals of less-developed countries.** This effort is funded in part by business and government interests in the host country to upgrade their personnel.

e. **Some graduate departments make an effort toward more geographical diversity through admissions decisions. This is seen as contributing to a healthy diversity of perspectives.**

Special funding has been applied in some institutions to meet the objective of greater geographical diversity among exchange participants. No report was given on the numerical effectiveness of the special effort with directors of area studies (item c.), but there is no doubt that efforts like this raise *awareness* among students and faculty regarding less popular areas for study abroad.

Item d. represents a model followed by a number of U.S. universities whose outreach programs are welcomed in foreign cities where prospective students often do not have the resources to come for study in the U.S. These respondents reported successful graduate degree programs in San Salvador, Panama City, Hong Kong, Athens, Cairo and Singapore. Mature graduate students in these programs often receive financial aid from their local corporate or government agency employers.

Generally, institutions presenting a *best practice* for this topic indicated that an articulated goal exists among their international staff and administration to broaden their geographical representation and they indicate that some progress is being made.

Finances

Clearly one of the greatest concerns in international exchange, either for U.S. students going abroad or for international students in the U.S., is financial aid. A clearly articulated goal of most internationalization efforts is diversification in all areas; on the other hand, without financial assistance and/or incentives, diversification is an elusive goal. The major *obstacles/challenges* in the area of finances voiced by the responding institutions can be arranged in three categories, as below.

a. **Campus-based financial aid is less available for study-abroad or international students.**

   Respondents cited many concerns about the lack of financial assistance in general due to declining state support and increased reliance on tuition generation. Obstacles specific to international exchange are policy considerations, such as restrictions on use of state and federal financial aid either for study abroad or for scholarship support for international students and the prohibitively high out-of-state tuition costs

for international students. This latter challenge has been complicated somewhat by the distance education alternative afforded by a number of U.S. universities.

b. Development offices have little interest in support for international activities; foreign alumni are rarely cultivated successfully as financial resources.

Several respondents pointed to attitudes in development and alumni offices that work against either support for study abroad or for scholarship support for international students. There is an apparent lack of advocacy for either one or the other at many institutions. This factor may be due to inadequate or nonexistent efforts by administration or international staff on behalf of international exchange. Many development (fundraising) and alumni (reunions, regional clubs) efforts focus on specific issues or needs and often are focused on individual schools or colleges within the university. Since neither study abroad nor financial assistance for international students are considered by many development and alumni offices to be "high-profile" need areas, they both suffer for lack of support. A related challenge is the difficulty of getting foreign alumni of U.S. universities to contribute to *alma mater.* This is exacerbated both by distance and by a lack of understanding among many international graduates of the rationale behind and need for alumni support.

c. Development of institutional linkages is costly in time and resources.

Many successful study-abroad programs are based on university-to-university institutional linkages. Similarly, many international students select their U.S. universities based on linkages, either formal or informal, between their undergraduate institutions and U.S. universities. Institutional linkages, however, are not easy to develop, requiring considerable time, effort and money. Moreover, respondents pointed to what they considered "institutional ignorance" regarding the long-term value of establishing linkages with foreign universities.

Several *best practices* were described by responding institutions that address the issue of financing study abroad or scholarship support for international students. The programs and/or practices described can be classified into four types as indicated below.

a. Presidential or institutional priority status can stimulate international exchange.

One of the actions described by respondents that resulted in higher levels of participation in study abroad as well as an increased presence of international students on U.S. campuses is nothing more than a proclamation from the universities' highest officials (presidents and provosts) that internationalization is among the institutions' highest priorities. Presidential statements, or initiatives, indicating that study abroad and the presence of international students are among the top institutional priorities have resulted in the following outcomes at some respondents' universities:

- Development offices have successfully focused their fundraising efforts in these areas.
- Alumni offices have established active international alumni clubs in many countries.
- Financial aid offices have found various mechanisms to use financial aid for study abroad and to direct financial assistance to deserving international students.

- University-affiliated foundation trustees have channeled support to study abroad and international scholarships.

b. Sponsored/subsidized educational exchanges can result in continuing relationships.

Another initiative that was shown to be successful in enhancing student exchanges in both directions has been sponsored or subsidized international programs. The initiatives described by several institutions usually involved one-time, funded programs that served to "link" a U.S. university with an international partner university. Once established, the "linked" or "partner" universities continued their relationship through such ongoing activities as student and faculty exchanges, joint research initiatives and varied training activities. The initial one-time funding either came from the collaborating institutions, or, more commonly, from an external funding source in response to a grant or contract opportunity (USAID, USIA, foundations, foreign governments). Funded programs included training activities, educational exchanges, scholarship programs and others. In a very real way, the initial funding served as "seed money" for the continuing and ongoing relationship between the partner universities.

c. Focused fundraising or development activities are successful at some institutions.

Several universities cited their success at raising funds to support educational exchanges through focused campaigns designed for specific groups or organizations. In other words, these universities experienced more success by focusing their fundraising efforts on specific international exchange programs or specific purposes (e.g., scholarships for international students) and then by targeting these efforts on designated groups or organizations, such as international alumni from specific countries and/or foundations with specific funding priorities, either geographic or programmatic. These kinds of focused fundraising efforts usually require considerable cooperation between the development office and the international exchange office. In this regard, one institution described a successful $5 million fundraising effort for study abroad jointly administered by its development and educational exchange offices. Another institution reported considerable success using study-abroad alumni to assist with fundraising efforts on behalf of study abroad. On a somewhat more sobering note, while several respondents mentioned international alumni as a potential source for financial support, they also pointed out the very limited success they have had thus far.

d. Some universities have institutionalized broad support practices for international exchange.

One of the responding institutions provides a $500 scholarship (non-competitive grant) to all students participating in study-abroad programs. Other institutions provide considerable support to their faculty for international travel related to their research, to participate in international conferences, to develop linkages and/or to participate in training programs. Funds for these purposes come from varied sources, including general funds, endowments, federal sources and student fees. One institution reported using limited general funds to support international exchange activities on a matching basis (schools and colleges would need to match the amount

provided by the university). In a similar vein, another institution reported on a program in which it supported faculty research abroad premised on matching support from an external (not personal) source. A Texas institution reported that all full-time students at public state institutions can be assessed each semester (as a part of their student activities fee) to support study abroad. This fee (from $1.00 to $3.00) must be approved by student referendum at each institution and thus can provide a large and renewable funding source for this purpose.

e. **Other specific practices were cited as follows:**

- One institution reported a highly successful program with their international alumni clubs whereby the clubs arranged for international internships for current students.
- Several institutions reported successful initiatives involving key international alumni in placement of interns, in sponsoring scholarships, in development of alumni clubs and in establishing linkages.
- One institution reported successful fundraising efforts by the participants themselves to defray their costs in study-abroad programs.
- Another is developing a specific foundation to encourage and receive support from study-abroad alumni.

Financing study abroad and locating scholarship support for international students are among the greatest challenges facing international educators. Lack of commitment—sometimes the consequence of institutional and/or community provincialism—seems to be the predominant obstacle. However, the *best practices* described suggest that the challenge can be met. Institutions that place a high premium on international experiences for their students and faculty can, as a rule, find a way to make this possible. At the very least, that has been the message from those universities that described their *best practices* for this survey.

Individual vs. Group Programs

Single student or faculty placement entails somewhat different services, costs and objectives in contrast with sending or receiving groups of scholars to or from an international site. This survey item elicited the practical problems and challenges that responding institutions have encountered in administering and/or facilitating individual and group programs. An analysis of the responses indicates that, for the most part, the two types of programs have different expectations and present distinct challenges. As a rule (and there are exceptions), group programs are usually short-term while individual placements can be either short- or long-term. This distinction alone—short- vs. long-term—implies two different sets of concerns. Most institutions report greater *challenges/obstacles* with individual student arrangements.

a. **Arrangements for individual study abroad and reciprocal visiting scholars are more costly in staff time and often more expensive in logistics for each participant.** Obviously, staff planning for the many is more efficient than making multiple individual plans. Also, groups may obtain discounts in travel, housing, board and other services. While the institution typically does detailed arranging for group

programs, the individual going abroad sometimes has to assume more of this responsibility, due in part to the cost in staff time.

b. **Individual exchanges can present problems unique to each case.** One institution may send more students/faculty than the partner university; complexities in banking tuition are common; acceptable living arrangements may be more difficult; complexities of relocating—leaving family and friends—are greater concerns for individual exchanges.

c. **Responsibilities for hosting individual scholars discourage some U.S. faculty from participating in visiting scholar programs.**

d. **Faculty time is not cost-effective in planning for individuals as compared with group programs.** A faculty member may be more willing to invest time and effort to plan for and lead a group study-abroad program of his/her choosing. Such attention to an individual's program is less rewarding within a university's recognition system.

While much was made of the cost advantages in time and money of group international programs as compared to individual plans, a number of respondents reiterated that individual exchanges and study-abroad plans were uniquely rich learning experiences for students and should be promoted. The educational benefits are great and such plans *can be* very affordable for the student and the institution.

Best practices regarding group versus individual international exchange mirror the *obstacles/challenges* summarized above and identify some additional strengths of group programs.

a. **Group programs—more cost efficient—also allow efficient planning, recruiting, student services, orientation and programs tailored to fit specific goals.**

b. **Individual student plans allow customizing for individual needs, more integration with campus and community and more diversity among students.**

c. **Group grants (i.e., USAID, USIA, USDA, etc.) help initiate ongoing administrative and service structures helpful to a variety of international activities.**

d. **Short-term group programs appeal to non-traditional students and community participants who could not study abroad for one or two semesters.**

e. **Group study-abroad programs in linkage with foreign universities nurture continuity for research and for faculty and staff exchange in both directions.**

f. **Groups are more visible on campus and in the community and have an impact on multicultural awareness.**

These *best practice* responses echo the views on *challenges/obstacles* regarding group vs. individual programs. While there are significant advantages to group programs in terms of financial and time/effort costs, international exchange for individuals has unique values and should be maintained.

A factor that can be both an obstacle and an advantage regarding individual exchange is the issue of reciprocal reduced tuition arrangements. Higher out-of-state tuition rates may be waived for international students by the U.S. university in return for reduced rates for study abroad at a linked foreign institution. The challenge in such arrangements lies in maintaining balance in the numbers coming and going, which is especially difficult to do

on a semester-by-semester basis. Consequently, some universities have made arrangements in which reciprocity in numbers is sought over time rather than by semester. Others employ a kind of "banking" concept, whereby the U.S. student and the international student each pay tuition at their home institution and then, in effect, change places for the semester. In all of these examples, a challenge lurks in the complexities of administration and bookkeeping.

An additional cost-associated challenge appearing in both group and individual arrangements is the practice that, before placement of Fulbright and other externally funded international scholars (arguably the "best and the brightest" among international students), in-state tuition rates or even waiver of tuition is expected or required. This amounts to a level of cost sharing that the less well-endowed universities in the U.S. may find onerous.

Transfer of Credits

Almost all of the responding institutions report *challenges/obstacles* regarding transfer of credits. The majority of these referred to difficulties with the process on their own campuses. Responses centered on the three problem areas below.

a. **Difficulties with translation and evaluation of foreign transcripts, including:**
   - People with the necessary specialized knowledge are rare.
   - The institution cannot, or will not, employ such specialists.
   - Training and updating is a constant need in this work.
   - Equivalencies of courses are hard to determine and there is no widely accepted source of reference.

b. **Difficulties or great delays in getting official foreign transcripts.**

c. **A lack of flexibility in accepting foreign credits for transfer toward U.S. degrees.** Registrar offices and academic departments often will not accept courses for transfer unless they are identical to U.S. courses; others are somewhat less rigid but are unsophisticated about equivalencies.

Apparently obtaining international records and the process of transferring credits is a major area of frustration shared by the majority of universities responding. Due to the vast diversity of administrative practices and academic traditions around the globe, further complicated by language differences, this can be an awesome challenge as each institution tries to maintain its own academic integrity as well.

Some respondents mentioned that transfer of credits is less a problem regarding study abroad. Either the U.S. institution awards the credit or a study-abroad plan includes pre-approval of foreign university credit. No respondent mentioned problems international students might have in transferring U.S. credits back home or difficulty in having U.S. degrees recognized for various licenses and certifications abroad. Nonetheless, serious obstacles may exist in this realm, which deserve attention from the U.S.-based funding agencies that bring many international students to this country.

In *best practices* concerning transfer of credits, a wide variety of procedures and policies were cited which appear to alleviate to some degree the *obstacles* listed above. Some institutions do have a special office and/or specially trained personnel to handle transfer

work. Others have regular admissions staff members who work effectively in collaboration with academic departments to evaluate foreign transcripts.

Universities that are pleased with their methods tend to have special staff to serve international students in both admissions and registrar offices; they maintain close collaboration with the academic departments; and they have established methods and policies for credit transfer, especially for undergraduate students. They indicate that there are fewer established routines and they express less satisfaction with their procedures regarding graduate students.

From the perspectives of both *obstacles* and *best practices*, it is clear that timely, valid and reasonably flexible processing of student records is a formidable challenge on every campus.

Exchange Arrangements with Specific Foreign Universities

Challenges regarding exchange relationships with foreign universities were found in two stages of such development: Initiation of working arrangements, and then continuing maintenance of a link established between a U.S. institution and another abroad.

a. Difficulties in initiating exchange arrangements.

- Travel to explore linkage possibilities is very costly.
- Lack of reciprocity is a problem—a foreign university may be unwilling or unable to share costs and may be less flexible in transfer issues or program planning.
- Some U.S. institutions will not work with third-party providers.
- Faculty members in key departments may show no interest.

b. Difficulties in maintaining links established with foreign universities.

- After start-up funding, financial support often does not continue.
- Faculty and student interest wanes; with loss of a key professor a relationship can fail.
- Unrealistic expectations; expectations that cannot be met.

The ubiquitous concern of financial support applies here as in almost every other item regarding *challenges/obstacles*, and it is linked to other concerns listed above. The most promising of potential exchange affiliations may be with universities in developing countries; however, these universities are hard pressed to survive, much less help fund an international arrangement. International travel is expensive, and may be considered a luxury and lower in priority than domestic needs.

Some of the *challenges*, however, are not financial. Faculty attitudes and interest in international exchange both reflect and shape institutional values and departmental reward systems. Typically, an international program is inspired by one faculty member but its survival and academic integrity may depend upon the less-than-enthusiastic involvement of colleagues.

The *best practices* regarding exchange arrangements, as summarized below, tend to emphasize the value of established policies and procedures as well as the essentiality of faculty initiative.

a. **The institution has established policies and procedures regarding exchange arrangements.** These include, for example, published information for faculty, generic forms for agreements, a provost or dean to head efforts and tangible encouragement for faculty and departments to develop linkages.

b. **Contact is maintained with partner institutions through visits and e-mail.**

c. **After seed funding (perhaps an external grant) expires, activities are maintained through aggressive seeking of mutual projects, research, private sector and agency support.**

As with survey item 1 regarding recruitment, some institutions enjoy a substantial number of international linkages due in part to their international stature and/or attractive climate and social setting. One university reported that "our recognition makes agreements easy." Another, which has an elaborate structure for international agreements, has over 100 continuing agreements with institutions abroad!

Perhaps more than any other facet of international exchange, the establishment of arrangements with foreign universities seems to hinge upon faculty initiative. Individual faculty members, motivated by academic interest and/or rewards and incentives, initiate these relationships with their counterparts abroad and the longevity of such ventures is dependent upon their continuing commitment.

Communication/Dissemination of Information

In both *challenges/obstacles* and in *best practices*, computers and e-mail are most mentioned—as a boon when they are functional, and when they are absent or inefficient as a problem. Widespread availability and use of e-mail on U.S. campuses is a given fact and little mentioned; thus its scarcity in some places abroad is very noticeable. It is interesting to note that language differences were not mentioned as a communication problem in international exchange. Most concerns reported fell within the following three categories.

a. **Communication with students abroad and with foreign institutions is often handicapped by limited or nonexistent computer services and e-mail and also by inefficient and insecure regular mail.**

b. **An up-to-date database of international alumni is difficult to maintain.**

c. **Highly segmented colleges and units of the university discourage communication institution-wide.**

Problem b. is related, of course, to the communication problems cited in a., but is also an artifact of cultural difference. U.S. university graduates traditionally hold emotional ties to the *alma mater* and institutions successfully seek the continuing support of their alumni. These cultural patterns are less common in some countries and the distance and communication problems compound the difficulty for U.S. universities seeking to cultivate such ties with foreign alumni who returned home.

As mentioned in regard to finance and other items, institutional commitment, in the form of presidential endorsement or mission statement, can go far in focusing the attention of a diverse array of academic units upon international exchange. Item c. above perhaps implies an institution lacking such commitment.

Best practices in communication regarding international exchange somewhat parallel the *obstacles* mentioned above.

a. **Technology—e-mail, websites and Internet—were mentioned by almost all respondents as most efficient and cost effective.**

b. **Telephone and regular mail, though slower and less efficient, are still heavily used, especially mail for documents.** Telephone conference calls are very valuable on occasions when immediate interaction is desirable.

c. **For home-campus dissemination, numerous media and contact strategies were submitted, such as newsletters, posters, brochures, as well as class, club and organization visits.**

d. **Several institutions emphasized the promise of continuing contact with international alumni, but few have an effective system for this so far.**

Effective utilization of the Internet and e-mail top the list of *best practices* in communication. As computer capacity improves in developing countries, these electronic media show great promise to facilitate communication that was unthinkable just a decade ago.

As in virtually every other aspect of promoting international exchange, it appears also that institutional commitment and consistent, organized efforts bring improvement in communication and dissemination of information.

Immigration and Other Legal Issues

Almost every institution responding to this survey cited serious problems in dealing with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). *Challenges/obstacles* reported in three categories were interrelated.

a. **The volume of paperwork regarding visas and immigration status for international exchange is considered a huge and onerous burden.** Time of international staff is inordinately diverted from other important tasks, or excessive costs are expended to employ specialized staff for this purpose.

b. **Rules and regulations of INS are extremely complex and INS processing time often is inordinately long; new CIPRIS/SEVIS regulations may take staff time away from serving students.**

c. **The high costs and complexity of H1-B visa applications can cause a university to lose valuable faculty and staff prospects.**

d. **Institutions (with a few exceptions) cannot provide services for immigration or permanent residency status, nor for IRS tax issues.** A few hire full- or part-time immigration attorneys but feel the cost is prohibitive.

These services are unanimously seen as unreasonably complex and costly, yet every institution with substantial international exchange activities must deal with them. The majority of universities handle internally the visa issues for international students and visiting scholars as well as for organized study-abroad programs. Most universities do not handle immigration (except for long-term employees) nor do they process IRS tax paper-

work. Typically, all provide some basic printed information and often refer individuals to local legal aid or tax specialists.

A pair of quotations from the survey responses poignantly expresses the kind of response this item evoked: "Government legislation in assigning international student fees caused havoc and consternation in increasing the work load in our international offices." "The proliferation of INS and IRS rules and regulations has turned many international student and scholar advisers into full-time immigration officials."

The *best practices* that address the challenge of immigration and other legal issues describe the application of considerable effort and resources to meet this need.

a. **Typically, international offices provide mass information on visa and tax matters through websites, flyers, orientations, handbooks, etc.**

b. **These offices help initiate visa applications for students and scholars; they provide advice and/or referral regarding tax returns, international travel requests, immigration issues for hiring foreign faculty and staff at great cost.**

c. **Some institutions provide legal aid from the university counsel's office or as a part of student services.**

d. **Fees are sometimes charged to defray costs of these special services.**

According to the concerns summarized above, services for immigration and other legal issues are perceived as a debilitating drain upon the staff time and resources of campus international offices. Items c. and d. of *best practices* suggest strategies for offsetting some of this cost.

Practices in Social Support and Cultural Enrichment for International Participants

This item, like item 8 regarding immigration and legal issues, elicited responses citing *challenges/ obstacles* from almost all universities. Lengthy descriptions of concerns seem to fit into three categories.

a. **Arranging social-cultural contacts and activities is very costly in international staff time and energy.** This is due in part to the conditions mentioned in b. and c. just below. The coordinating of host family programs and of myriad activities involving existing campus and community organizations is extremely complex.

b. **The diversity and complexity of nationality-oriented or religious campus and community organizations can obstruct integration and multicultural goals.** In some universities (and cities) such groups can sometimes "take possession" of incoming international students. These influences may exacerbate awareness of cultural differences and status implications, rendering integration into campus life more problematical.

c. **Some campuses and their surrounding communities are apathetic toward international students or resistant to their integration in the local society.** Land-locked mid-Americans, in communities with few visible ethnically different residents, may view minor cultural differences as "strange," "foreign," or "funny" (no humor intended). This further complicates the social-cultural integration efforts of international staff.

Since the process of social-cultural integration has no parameters, the international staff of an institution could easily become overwhelmed with related activities. The challenge, of course, is even greater if there is no prevailing supportive attitude in the environment.

Respondents for several institutions emphasized some negative effects of well-organized international student or community clubs. Foreign traditions of discrimination in terms of ethnicity, caste, financial status, etc. may persist in the campus setting, in the community and *among the international students themselves.* Thus some students are drawn into small, closed societies while others are excluded. One large university cited specific examples of national, ethnic and religious groups that embraced or rejected certain other groups.

Best practices in social support and cultural enrichment illustrate what an international office *can* do, when provided with adequate staffing and support. A broad variety of ongoing programs and individual activities were described.

a. **Universities with many international students tend to have a well-staffed international office, providing continuity of resources and activities for social-cultural development.** Other institutions reconstruct such support with each funded international program and/or rely on volunteer assistance.

b. **An international club provides a core peer contact, which can be truly multicultural.**

c. **A strong host family program can be very effective, but it requires continuing staff coordination.** If "bonding" occurs, the family-student relation often perseveres for years. Some failures in adjustment of international students to families were cited.

d. **Outreach of international students to area K-12 schools, community organizations and churches—to share culture and language—is mutually rewarding.**

Among the successful activities mentioned were orientations, workshops on campus life, educational travel, sports and fine arts events, religious participation, housing arrangements, special events such as international week, international tea (or coffee), international film festival, international banquet, and arts, crafts, music, dance demonstrations, etc.

Internationalization of the Campus and the Community

This item is interrelated with item 9 regarding social-cultural enrichment for international students. Some responses point to activities that contribute both to social-cultural enrichment and internationalization of the campus and the community. It appears that internationalization of the campus and community is not a primary objective of international offices in most of the responding universities. However, as they pursue enculturation for foreign students, it is clear that those activities broaden the horizon of the host community as well. The *challenges/obstacles* are now very familiar.

a. **Planning/managing visits, presentations, displays, demonstrations, etc. is very costly in international staff time and resources.** However, many individual students assimilate quickly into organizations, churches, arts and sports activities, etc.

b. **Efforts in internationalization are frustrating due to a general lack of interest, both on campus and in the community.** One response states that typical local

students and community residents are unsophisticated, are naïve about the world abroad and have little desire to change.

The *best practices* concerning internationalization included an extensive list of individual activities, which serve to mix international students with U.S. students and with citizens of the community. Some of these are initiated by the international office, others by campus organizations, by community civic organizations, by churches, etc. Major categories of these activities are as follows.

a. **An organized speakers bureau sends international and study-abroad students to make presentations throughout the campus and the city.**

b. **International student visits to campus classes and K-12 classrooms is very enlightening—especially in communities with little ethnic diversity.**

c. **Collaboration with modern language departments and international studies programs contributes to their goals as well as to enculturation of international students.**

d. **Involvement of international students with faculty and staff as advisers and host families stimulates campus-wide internationalization.**

When international staff can and do devote time and effort to internationalization activities, their *best practices* are succeeding, according to the survey responses. Although they may feel frustration in the process, it is possible that such efforts are bringing significant changes of attitudes and enlightenment among the heretofore more provincial communities and campuses.

Professional Development for Academic and Student Services Personnel Who Deal with International Participants

Just two major *obstacles* appeared in responses to this item, although they were stated in a variety of ways.

a. **Sufficient funds are not provided for professional development of personnel who deal with international participants.**

b. **Weak or nonexistent policy regarding international exchange results in lack of interest in professional development in this area.**

These two obstacles are linked, of course; policy favoring an activity often results in better financial support. However, the mere stating of a priority can increase administrative and faculty motivation in pursuit of an objective, with or without budget support. Other concerns mentioned for this item are clearly related, such as time demands on staff, poor attendance at the few professional development events offered, rising membership and conference fees in NAFSA (which provides significant professional development in international education), incompatible credit hour or semester systems resulting in increased administrative and paperwork burden, etc.

A comment from one university may express a challenge shared by others: "a basic confusion exists over the terms 'international' and 'multicultural,' leaving some campus units wondering which office is best equipped to provide. . . cross-cultural training." Another institution reported that "diversity" initiatives focused mostly upon needs of African-American students on campus and improvement of black-white relations. These perceptions suggest that some institutions need dialogue and clarification of their goals in

the realms of *international exchange, multicultural awareness* and the multiple dimensions of *diversity.*

Best practices described in regard to professional development for personnel who deal with international participants were few in number, suggesting that this is an area that has not received a great deal of attention.

a. **Some international office staff members are active in NAFSA, attending national and regional conferences, workshops, training, etc.** Some have regular budget support for this; others must seek out funding.

b. **Some international offices conduct seminars for faculty and staff across the campus on international concerns.** These include immigration/visa issues, services for international students, cross-cultural values, etc.

c. **Graduate assistants, interns and practicum students learn international education through placement in international offices or working in funded international programs.**

Several institutions stated in the *challenges/obstacles* response to this item that they had no problems in this area. They state that cross-cultural training is offered and embraced and international staff members attend professional meetings to stay current in international exchange procedures.

Health and Safety Issues

With the wisdom of hindsight following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, we now perceive that ensuring the security of U.S. study-abroad students represents an immediate and growing challenge. In addition, the *anticipation* of danger—not only for U.S. students abroad but also for international students coming to our country—may have a chilling effect on the numbers of participants in international exchange in both directions. While many young people of traditional college age still consider themselves immortal, their parents and sponsors surely will be less inclined to send them to global areas where they may be perceived as "in harm's way."

A survey item might have been included seeking reports of *best practices* and *obstacles* relating to health and safety abroad. However, we are pleased to inform readers of this report that extensive resources exist on these topics in university exchange. A number of universities across the nation provide, on their Internet websites, information and advice regarding these issues. Such information ranges from official government travel warnings to informal advice for students and their parents as plans are made for study abroad.

Perhaps the most comprehensive single source for such material is the SAFETI (Safety Abroad First - Educational Travel Information) Clearinghouse Project, which is a part of the *Center for Global Education* at the University of Southern California. This project, as well as seven other universities and the NAFSA International Network, are funded in part by FIPSE (the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education) of the U.S. Department of Education. These institutions work together as Project Partners in the development of SAFETI resources and the SAFETI Clearinghouse. SAFETI is reached on the Internet at: http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/globaled/safeti/aboutsafeti.html

Consonant with our primary focus in this report upon the responses of survey participants, included below is a summary of the few allusions to this security issue which were found scattered among responses to the survey items. In responding to the items regarding

recruitment, diversity of majors and diverse geographical destinations among study abroad students, five universities listed security concerns as obstacles. None of these respondents cited actual incidents of bodily harm or serious threats thereof to students or scholars abroad. Rather, they referred to the negative effect that perceptions of danger in certain foreign environments had upon the attitudes of students and their families. References to security were often linked with concerns about health care, comfort, accommodations and "backward" academic and cultural environments.

A few direct quotes convey these concerns vividly. The following responses referred to difficulties in broadening study-abroad participation to Asian, African, Middle Eastern and Latin American destinations.

> ". . .distance, language, very different culture, perception that 'it is dangerous and backward,' . . .health concerns." ". . .lack of infrastructure to provide security, comfort and affordable facilities." "Safety and security of students is an issue for study abroad." "Students don't enroll (in Asia, Africa, Mideast) due to . . . real or perceived safety issues." One institution mentioned a student view that apparently included even the other forty-nine states as dangerous along with the foreign world: ". . .attitude that 'study abroad isn't for me.' . . .fear of traveling outside Texas."
>
> Another respondent expressed the opinion that "media stories tend to highlight dangers of study abroad rather than the safety measures taken by the majority of university study-abroad offices. . . especially regarding study in less-known areas."

No institution responding to the survey offered a *best practice* in regard to safety and health issues for study-abroad students. Regarding the item on group vs. individual student exchange, several pointed out that group programs often resulted in more comfortable and satisfactory living arrangements and an attitude of greater confidence among the participants. Feelings regarding security may be a factor in this perception.

Likewise, no institution mentioned health and safety as a concern in recruitment of international students nor were these factors seen as problems on U.S. campuses. This too may change as a result of terrorist activity, when foreign parents and sponsors begin to perceive the U.S. as no longer the secure haven it has been. Thus the *perception* of danger may become a growing threat to maintaining desired numbers of international students in our universities.

Although not mentioned by respondents to this survey, *best practices* on the issues of health and safety abound. Many examples will be found among the aforementioned resources from SAFETI at the University of California as well as on the websites of a number of other universities.

Summary

As noted in the introduction to this report, some universities are faring very well in international exchange. Some have more qualified international applicants than they can accommodate and their international staff is adequate in numbers and efficient in its tasks. Some have reliable financial aid for study abroad, and some have extensive stable relationships with foreign partner institutions. Others do not report such favorable circumstances in their *best practices* responses. However, *all* of the responding institutions identified some *challenges and obstacles*, which frustrate their efforts toward fully achieving their goals in international exchange.

Neither the number of respondents nor the narrative nature of the data we received permits us to draw a statistically significant picture of conditions and practices in international exchange beyond the campuses represented. However, several trends or themes seemed to emerge with some frequency or were stated very forcefully by one or a few responding institutions. These themes, sometimes raising worrisome issues, thus seem worthy of discussion and perhaps further study.

The issue of finances permeated responses to all items. Some institutions appear comfortable with sufficient support for myriad activities in comparison to others that seem to be struggling to maintain modest international programs. Yet all assert that increased financial support is a key ingredient for successful progress toward their goals. Additional funds are needed for all elements of the administration of international programs as well as for financial aid for both international students and study-abroad participants.

Concurrent with sufficient financial support, or perhaps preceding it developmentally, is the variable of institutional commitment to international exchange and internationalization. This was repeatedly mentioned as an *obstacle* in relation to many survey items and, likewise, it repeatedly appeared as a supportive factor in *best practices*. The implication in these responses was clear. If the institution—by presidential fiat or in policy duly processed through governing bodies—clearly affirms goals of internationalization and global participation, tangible support follows. Such support may not appear directly in budget lines, but the message is understood by administrators, development officers, alumni and faculty members pursuing scholarly initiatives. Compounding the positive effect of such institutional commitment, of course, is a favorable attitude toward international affairs across the campus and in the surrounding community and state.

Another recurrent theme is that of a central office for international exchange that functions broadly in administration of programs, services for international students and organizational efforts to promote exchange across the university. Those that have such an organization describe it among the *best practices* and those without it cite the need for it as an *obstacle*. Attendant on such centralization is the importance of distinct admissions staff members who are specially trained to process international documents and who collaborate closely and effectively with academic units. Something of a dilemma exists in that international staff wish to support the integrity of their academic units while also

seeking greater flexibility in the transfer of foreign university credits for international students and the inclusion of study-abroad work in degree programs of U.S. students. This is more often a challenging issue with the professional programs across the campus.

Many of us in the field of international exchange assume that all institutions desire more international students but some larger institutions, particularly those with acclaimed technical, business and science programs, have a surplus of qualified applicants. Popular also, not necessarily for academic reasons, are some universities located in famous cities or in areas warm in both climate and social ambience. This phenomenon is reported in *best practices* by some schools enjoying such popularity and as a *challenge* by some in rural areas with harsher climates.

Almost all institutions responding indicated that the requirements of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) impose a formidable burden upon international staff time and resources.

A reasonable generalization emerging from this study is that universities with greater financial resources, distinguished academic reputations (especially in technology, science and business) and/or located in a balmy climate with ample recreational attractions fare better in meeting almost all challenges in international exchange (although these report some obstacles as well). In such settings, talented leadership in international education can emerge and provide impetus for campus-wide interest and support.

Some institutions less favored by fate, however, also maintain thriving international exchange through the exemplary efforts of creative international staff members supported by administrators, faculty and a community committed to the concept of internationalization.

On some other campuses, international exchange enjoys neither sufficient resources nor a supportive attitude on the part of administration, faculty and community. Perhaps the rising wave of internationalization across the United States will, in time, rise there too and buoy the efforts of struggling international staff.

Appendix

Responding Universities

California Polytechnic State University

Idaho State University

Iowa State University of Science and Technology

Lincoln University of Missouri

Michigan State University

Ohio State University

Purdue University

State University of New York at Stony Brook

Texas A&M University

Towson University

University at Buffalo, The State University of New York (UB)

University of Cincinnati

University of Florida

University of Iowa

University of Louisville

University of Minnesota

University of Missouri at Kansas City

University of Wisconsin

Virginia Commonwealth University

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